

March 13, 2005

John Fedak  
26 Race Street  
Bradford PA, 16701

John

Unfortunately, the committee voted 2-5 not to accept the documentation of the Mountain Bluebird at Warren High School on October 21, 2002 as definitive. I say unfortunately because I think the bird was identified correctly, and because the reason the report was not accepted had more to do with the word choices than anything else. There were 2 main problems which the committee could not get around. First was that the rump of the bird was described as white. The rump of a Mountain Bluebird is blue regardless of age or sex. Second the wings were described as scaled, or scalloped. This is too imprecise to be useful. The wings include 2-3 feather groups, Primaries, secondaries-tertiaries, and coverts. On most birds the edges of these feathers are paler than the center but this is not what is meant by scaling, or scalloping. This usually refers to a rather distinct contrast between the edge of one feather where it overlaps the center of the underlying feather, either light on dark or vice-versa. While it is true that Mountain Bluebirds have pale edging on the secondaries and especially the tertiary feathers as well as the coverts and to a much lesser degree the primaries, to call them scaled or scalloped is incorrect since they contrast no more than many other species and much less than many species. Otherwise the descriptions were excellent and seemed to accurately describe a Mountain Bluebird. However the committee would be remiss to ignore the above inconsistencies.

Sincerely

Matt Sharp  
Chair: Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee.

"Mountain Bluebird" 649-012002

I believe that John Fedak, Bill Reynolds, and I (Matt Cook) saw a mountain Bluebird on 10/22/02. The bird was in with about 20 eastern bluebirds. The bird we saw had a long, slender black bill. The bill was longer than the eastern bluebirds. The head was a different color than an eastern bluebird, the crown was a light blue-gray, the ear patch was a light gray. The bird had a white eye ring. The chin, throat, and breast on the bird we saw was a light gray fading to white on the belly. The eastern bluebirds have a red or orange on the breast and this bird showed no sign of that. The back on the bird we saw was a light gray-blue. The wings were a darker gray-blue. The bird had scallops on the wings. The scallops were white and a dark blue to black. The tail was also a darker gray-blue. The bird stood up straighter than an eastern bluebird. It was not as slouched. I used ~~atasc~~ 10x50 binoculars.

Matt Cook

649-01-2002

Mountain to Eastern Comparison " Billy Reynolds

OPTICS: Tasco 10X50 Binoculars

" Mountain

TIME OF DAY: 2:45

" Bluebird "

VISIBILITY: Good

WEATHER: Partly Cloudy

WIND: light - None

WITNESSES: John Fedak and Matt Cook

DISTANCE: About 20 feet

HEAD: Blue-gray; beak was black, longer than Eastern Bluebirds; thin eye ring.

NECK: Grayish blue

BELLY: Gray at top lighter as it went down, almost white at bottom.

RUMP: white.

BACK: Blue.

WINGS: Blue with darker Blue-Black scaling.

STANCE: Almost straight up.

FEET: Black

LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 15 minutes

William J Reynolds



Nov 10-84

HEAD: Blue; beak was black; eye ring.

"Eastern  
Bluebird"

NECK: Orange.

BELLY: Orange.

RUMP: White

BACK: Blue

WINGS: Blue to dark blue

STANCE: low; almost in a slouch position.

FEET: Black

OPTICS: TASCO 10X50 Binoculars

TIME OF DAY: 2:45

VISIBILITY: GOOD

WEATHER: Partly cloudy

WIND: light - NONE

WITNESSES: John Fedak and Matt Cook

DISTANCE: VARYING (Near-Far)

LENGTH OF OBSERVATION: 25 minutes.

PENNSYLVANIA RARE BIRD REPORT FORM

This form is presented as a convenience and guide. It can be used if desired, but is not necessary for submitting a report. Species requiring documentation are those on the Review List or not on the Official List of Birds of Pennsylvania. Send documentation to:

Nick Pulcinella, Secretary  
Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee  
613 Howard Ave.  
West Chester, PA 19380  
nickpul@bellatlantic.net

649-01-2002

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SPECIES (common and scientific name) Mountain Bluebird  
Subspecies (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS 1 SEX(ES) Female ♀

AGE(S) AND PLUMAGE(S) (e.g. immature; adult in breeding plumage; year for gulls; basic or alternate if you prefer those terms; state of molt if applicable): Seemingly Adult

DATE OF OBSERVATION 10/21/02 TIME 2:45 to about 3:00 pm

LOCATION (city, borough, township) Warren High school (Powerline behind school)

EXACT SITE (e.g. name of park, lake, road) at junction of cross country trail + powerline

OBSERVER REPORTING:

Name John G. Fedak  
Address 26 Race Street  
City Bradford State Pa ZIP 16701  
e-mail (optional) jfedak@charter.net phone (optional) 814 362 1052

OTHER OBSERVERS (only those who saw and identified the bird with you):

Matt Cook and Bill Reynolds

HABITAT (e.g. mowed field, woodland edge, any other details) Powerline with grass + dogwood  
Some Hawthorne in middle - forested second growth west + mature growth east

DISTANCE TO BIRD 20-30 feet

VIEWING CONDITIONS (sky, weather, position of sun relative to you) clear sky, about 55°  
light mist (2 on scale) Bird was seen with sun behind and  
to the side of the observers

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED leica binoculars 8x42

DESCRIPTION (Include as much detail as you observed - size relative to other species present; "jizz"= e.g. posture, body shape, and proportions; colors and patterns of plumage; bill, eye, and leg characteristics; other features relevant to this individual): Approximately same size as Eastern Bluebirds present, but appeared longer, had a more upright posture and less of a shoulder hump. Black bill, legs and eye. The eye had an eye ring, almost to a beard drop at posterior end. The head and nape were bluish gray to gray near the shoulder, the neck was light gray that faded as it got closer to the belly. The belly was white. The wings looked almost scalloped as the edges of the black/blue were a lighter gray/tan color. Primaries showed a lot of blue as did the tail.

(Please use an additional page if necessary.)

BEHAVIOR (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing) The bird was in a flock of Eastern Bluebirds, All ages + sexes relevant to the season - approximately 20 birds were present. It perched for a few minutes on the powerline and then flew into the trees, occasionally making itself visible next to E. Bluebirds for comparison

VOCALIZATIONS

With all the E. Bluebirds present vocalizing, I didn't pick out any sounds specific to this bird.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE IF ANY:

Photograph \_\_\_\_\_ Video recording \_\_\_\_\_ Audio recording \_\_\_\_\_ Drawing \_\_\_\_\_

Photographer/recorder/illustrator:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ phone (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Please include a copy of the photograph or recording with your report, and accompany it with a complete written documentation if the identification is obvious to you. If you made a drawing, please include it.

IF THIS IS A DEAD BIRD:

General condition \_\_\_\_\_  
If collected (by permit), location and number of specimen if known \_\_\_\_\_

SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES (how you eliminated others)

posture + plumage - the Eastern Bluebirds were with it to give good comparisons to both. There was no hint of orange/red on breast and it perched very upright in all locations it was seen. Western bluebird does not have the same posture exhibited by this bird and also has an orange/red breast.

DISCUSSION - Anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it

The bird was first seen by Matt Cook who said "okay, what's this bird?" while I was describing the E. Bluebirds present. He knew it was different immediately and as soon as I got on the bird, I knew what I thought it was. I asked them to write a description and then let them look in the book before telling them what it was.

(Please use an additional page if necessary)

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND/OR SIMILAR SPECIES

I have seen Mt. Bluebirds out west, I see Eastern Bluebirds all the time

ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION? (why or why not) YES

REFERENCES CONSULTED:

During observation NONE  
After observation - after describing it in writing, INTERNET, National Geographic Guide to B. 113 Eastern Peterson, and Golden Guides

DATE OF THIS REPORT: 10-21-02

SIGNATURE OF OBSERVER 

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West Chester, PA 19380  
nickpul@bellatlantic.net

649-01-2002

SPECIES (common and scientific name) Mountain Bluebird *Sialia currucoides*  
Subspecies (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS 1 SEX(ES) Female

AGE(S) AND PLUMAGE(S) (e.g. immature; adult in breeding plumage; year for gulls; basic or alternate if you prefer those terms; state of molt if applicable): Adult

DATE OF OBSERVATION 10/21/02 TIME 2:45

LOCATION (city, borough, township) Warren Area High School

EXACT SITE (e.g. name of park, lake, road) Cross-country trail

OBSERVER REPORTING:

Name Billy Reynolds  
Address 1675 Scandia Rd  
City Warren State Pa ZIP 16365  
e-mail (optional) reynolds@westpa.net phone (optional) 814-723-8471

OTHER OBSERVERS (only those who saw and identified the bird with you):

John Fedak, Matt Cook

HABITAT (e.g. mowed field, woodland edge, any other details) Power line with shrubs in the middle and trees on both sides.

DISTANCE TO BIRD 30 feet or less

VIEWING CONDITIONS (sky, weather, position of sun relative to you) clear sky, warm weather

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED Tasco binoculars 10x50

DESCRIPTION (Include as much detail as you observed – size relative to other species present; "jizz"= e.g. posture, body shape, and proportions; colors and patterns of plumage; bill, eye, and leg characteristics; other features relevant to this individual): same size as Eastern Bluebird. Stood straighter than Eastern Bluebird. The head was blue-gray with a black beak. It had a thin eye ring. The wings were blue with black-blue scaling. The breasts were almost gray turning lighter as you move down the breast. The rump was white.

(Please use an additional page if necessary.)

**BEHAVIOR** (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing) It popped up onto the powerline for a couple minutes and then disappeared again.

**VOCALIZATIONS**

**SUPPORTING EVIDENCE IF ANY:**

Photograph \_\_\_\_\_ Video recording \_\_\_\_\_ Audio recording \_\_\_\_\_ Drawing \_\_\_\_\_

**Photographer/recorder/illustrator:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ phone (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Please include a copy of the photograph or recording with your report, and accompany it with a complete written documentation if the identification is obvious to you. If you made a drawing, please include it.

**IF THIS IS A DEAD BIRD:**

General condition \_\_\_\_\_

If collected (by permit), location and number of specimen if known \_\_\_\_\_

**SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES** (how you eliminated others) had a gray breast, the others had orange breasts.

**DISCUSSION** – Anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it

(Please use an additional page if necessary)

**PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND/OR SIMILAR SPECIES**

None

**ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION ?** (why or why not) yes because John Fedak and I consulted and agreed.

**REFERENCES CONSULTED:**

During observation \_\_\_\_\_

After observation \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE OF THIS REPORT:** 11/5/02

**SIGNATURE OF OBSERVER** William S Reynolds



## Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

### Voting Tabulation – Round Two

Species: Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*)

Date of Sighting: 21 October 2002 to 21 October 2002

Location: WARREN HIGH SCHOOL

County : WARREN

Observer(s): John Fedak, Billy Reynolds, Matt Cook

Date of Submission: 2002

Submitted by: John Fedak, Billy Reynolds, Matt Cook

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

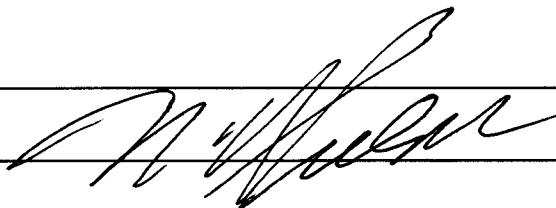
Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
G. Armistead				X				
D. Heathcote		X						
P. Hess						X		
J. Stanley				X				
E. Witmer		X						
R. Leberman				X				
M. Sharp				X				
TOTALS		2		4		1		
DECISION				X				

Comments:

2/5

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

2/10/04

**Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee**

**Tabulation Form - Round One**

Species: Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*)

Date of Sighting: 21 October 2002 to 21 October 2002

Location: WARREN HIGH SCHOOL

County: WARREN

Observer(s): John Fedak, Billy Reynolds, Matt Cook

Date of Submission: 2002

Submitted by: John Fedak, Billy Reynolds, Matt Cook

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

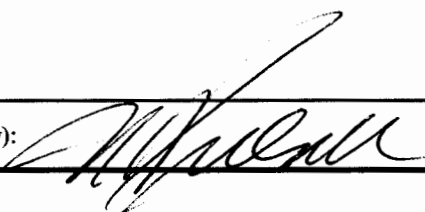
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A				Abstain
					Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	
G. Armistead		X						
D. Heathcote		X						
P. Hess		<del>X</del>				X		
J. Stanley		X						
E. Witmer		X						
R. Leberman		X						
M. Sharp				X				
TOTALS		5		1		1		
DECISION								

Comments: 5/2 - GO TO 2ND ROUND

Signature (Secretary):



Date: 6/7/03